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LA/APUB  
INCOMING

FRP: . . 3. . . . .

STATE

ACTION: NONE INFO: ALA/PA-2, ALA/PO/LA, ALA/SA/R, ALA/SA/RPU,  
ALA/SA/SE, ALA/SEM, ODPN-N, ODPS-S, OGI/EC/DI, OGI/GD/AWH, OGI/IIC/PI,  
OGITNATAB1, OGITNATAB2, OPCR/EALA, RF, FILC, LA/APUB-2, CR/W, EPU/LA,  
ICS/HC/LA, NCPM, NLC/CT, NIO/LA, PPS/10-3, PPS/PU-2, PPS/SEO-3, QA/STATE.  
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RR RUEAIIB  
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH  
STU9362  
RR RUEHC  
DE RUESAS #7658 3391000  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 040931Z DEC 84  
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 354  
INFO RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 6242  
RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN  
BT  
C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 7658

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PA  
SUBJECT: (U) VISIT TO PARAGUAY BY GROUP HUNTING MENGELE: LOCAL  
PRESS COMMENTARY

REF: ASUNCION 7526

1. (U) SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF THE HOLTZMAN GROUP LAST MONTH, THE LOCAL PRESS HAS CARRIED A NUMBER OF STORIES ON THE MENGELE QUESTION. THE ASUNCION PAPERS CARRIED THE WIRE SERVICE STORIES REPORTING THE GROUP'S RETURN TO THE U.S., AS WELL AS INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED HERE BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE.

2. (LOU) WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION, MOST OF THE PRESS COVERAGE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY OBJECTIVE, BY PARAGUAYAN STANDARDS. ONE LOCAL PAPER, FOR EXAMPLE, PRINTED AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS. KLARSFELD IN WHICH SHE SAID THAT MENGELE HAD BEEN SHIELDED BY PARAGUAYAN OFFICIALS AND INSISTED THAT HE WAS STILL IN PARAGUAY. THE WIRE SERVICE STORIES, WHICH REPORTED THE GROUP'S STATEMENTS THAT PARAGUAYAN OFFICIALS HAD AGREED TO AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MENGELE AFFAIR AND WERE AMENABLE TO THE PARTICIPATION OF OUTSIDE OBSERVERS, WERE ALSO GIVEN WIDE PLAY.

3. (LOU) THE EXCEPTION TO THE GENERALLY EVEN-HANDED TREATMENT IN THE PRESS CAME, NOT SURPRISINGLY, IN AN EDITORIAL ON NOVEMBER 29 IN THE RULING COLORADO PARTY ORGAN "PATRIA." THE EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT "THE FACT IS THAT THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT AGREED TO INVESTIGATE ANYTHING, BUT RATHER HAS STATED -- CORRECTLY -- THAT IS RECENTLY MADE AN INVESTIGATION WITHOUT RESULTS, NOT AT THE BEHEST OF KLARSFELD, BUT RATHER AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARAGUAYAN JUDICIARY." SIMILARLY, THE PAPER DISMISSED THE REPORT THAT "OUTSIDE OBSERVERS" WOULD BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INVESTIGATION.N

4. (U) THE EDITORIAL WENT ON TO ATTACK MRS. KLARSFELD'S ASSERTION THAT MENGELE WAS STILL IN PARAGUAY, AND THE IDEA OF OFFERING A REWARD FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HIS WHEREABOUTS. OVERALL, IT DISMISSED HER ACTIVITIES AS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BLACKEN PARAGUAY'S IMAGE. WHILE REJECTING THE NOTION OF RESPONDING TO DEMANDS, "PATRIA" INSTEAD CALLED ON THE USG TO "HELP CLEAR UP, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THIS DAMAGING ISSUE...."

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5. (C) WHILE THE "PATRIA" EDITORIAL CLEARLY DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR THE PROSPECT OF COOPERATION BY THE PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES WITH MS. HOLTZMAN AND HER COLLEAGUES, WE DO NOT TAKE IT AS AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF POLICY ON THE MATTER. THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY INTERIOR MINISTER MONTANARO SHOULD BE ACTED ON BY THE GROUP TO SEE WHERE THEY WILL LEAD.

6. (C) THE CHANCES HAVE NEVER BEEN GREAT THAT THE GOP WOULD TELL ALL THAT IT KNOWS ABOUT MENGELE, BUT WE WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME KIND OF LIMITED COOPERATION WITH MS. HOLTZMAN AND HER ASSOCIATES. WHAT THE "PATRIA" EDITORIAL DOES REFLECT IS THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THE PARAGUAYANS TO HOSTILE PUBLICITY, WHICH IS USUALLY, THOUGH NOT ALWAYS, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

CLARE

END OF MESSAGE

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